

# Adventure Ideas

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## Wizard War

Genre: Fantasy, Mini-Campaign

In this fantasy world, the action is in the cities, where the wizard guilds are organized by spell college.

The guilds have been battling for decades, trying to control each city. A few of them have succeeded. The Mind Controllers, for example, control the world's biggest port. Another city, located in a heavily-forested barony, is controlled by an alliance of Plant, Animal, and Elemental spellcasters.

The campaign begins when each of the player characters discovers that he (or she) has magic powers. They meet each other when the local mages, who have heard about their emerging powers, bring them together for interviews and examinations.

Right from the start, things do not go well. The PCs get strange reactions from every guild — confusion, surprise, and fear. At some point, they realize that they have become the talk of the wizard underground. They seem to be regarded as a threat of some kind.

When it's obvious that they are in danger, they run. The guilds send their best trackers and assassins. But every time the player characters are just about to be caught or killed, someone mysteriously saves them.

After a little cat-and-mouse fun (which forces them deep into the wilderness for safety) their mysterious savior presents himself. He leads the PCs to a safe place and explains what is happening to them.

He is a psi. So are the player characters. Psionic powers confuse the lesser mages (who see the supernatural results of spells but cannot detect the magic) and frighten the greater mages — because they know that even the best wizard is no match for a powerful psi.

These events lead to a campaign. The player characters are trained in a secret psi guild. They find out that all of the mage guilds want them dead, but there are a few "double agent" mages who secretly sympathize with the psis.

A lot of adventures are possible. After training, the campaign can begin with a handful of dangerous errands. For example, the PCs could be sent to deliver a message to one of the secret allies. Or, they might have to rescue a captured psi.

For a larger adventure, the PCs have to infiltrate a guild and instigate a war between it and a local rival. Alliances will have to be made with mayors, barons, and kings.

The PCs will learn the psionic discipline of mana damping. This could lead to a secret plan to destroy the world's mana. Will the player characters go along with the plan?

If you want to add subplots, create a rumor of traitors in the psi guild, working with the mage guilds to wipe out the psis once and for all. Or, the PCs might learn about the legendary White Circle: seven psi masters and seven wizards who want to end the conflict between psis and the guilds.



## Slimy Space Critters

Genre: Sci-Fi Adventure

In this one-shot adventure, a flying saucer lands in a rural, Midwestern town. The aliens inside have a simple mission: to erect their Mind-Control Tower and enslave humanity!

The players take the role of the aliens. The GM designs the alien race, and the players get to design their characters. They are worth 250 points. The aliens are shapeshifters; each has the Morph advantage. This will allow them to take the form of any human they see. Pick a Tech Level, something like TL11 or TL12, and let the players outfit their characters with weapons and gadgets.

They need twelve hours to set up the Mind-Control Tower — two to erect it and another ten to calibrate it. Once it's up, everyone in town can see it (it looks like one of those giant power-line towers). They will be conspicuous during the calibration hours. If they succeed, they throw the switch and control the brains of every human being on the planet. Cool!

Their only opposition is the local townspeople. That doesn't seem like much of a problem, but it is. Right from the beginning, everything goes wrong.

A handful of drunk hunters see the saucer land. Although one of the hunters wants to make peaceful contact with the aliens, the others want to defend Earth by "blowing them slimy space critters to pieces." How the aliens handle it is up to the players.

The second problem is the local nuclear power plant. It's going to melt down very soon, but no one knows it. The aliens find out when their equipment (including the saucer) start to malfunction — something about the crisis at the plant is causing their computers, weapons, robots, and other gadgets to fail. They have a few hours to get to the plant, locate the problem, and fix it. If they don't, the core melts, the town is flooded with lethal radiation, and the aliens' equipment is permanently destroyed. They might die, as well.

When they return from saving the plant, the saucer is gone. Someone found it and managed to transport it to the giant warehouse at the John Deere factory. (The tractors that used to be in the warehouse are now lined up outside.) They will have to find it and fight the humans who took it.

After that, things just get worse. It's up to the Game Master to do whatever it takes to keep the aliens on the defensive, fighting against these stupid, barbaric humans while they try to set up the tower.

The aliens might catch a cold and discover that it affects their Morphing power — they get stuck in human form, or maybe they are unable to change shape. Or maybe a small group of neo-pagans follow the aliens, trying to worship them. Police and local militia members are always showing up at the wrong time, guns blazing; a few try to ally themselves with the aliens to settle old scores with rival townspeople.

Will the player characters succeed? That depends on their ingenuity and the disposition of the GM. Just make sure it's fun. The players can have fun even when they are losing, if you do it right. Once Murphy's Law is invoked too many times and the players become frustrated, give them a fair chance to get the Mind-Control Tower up and running, and let the adventure draw to a close. Even if they can't beat the humans, they might be able to escape... so they can come back later and try again.

## Bugs

Genre: Modern Day, One-Shot

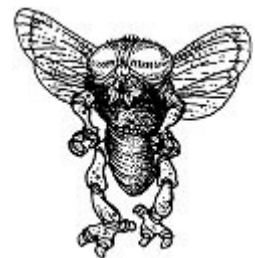
The player characters are normal humans living in a suburban neighborhood. For some strange reason, they are suddenly transformed into bugs. They soon find out that the condition is permanent unless they can get to the other side of the neighborhood before sundown.

It won't be easy. On their way, they will run into humans with bug spray, all kinds of animals, little kids with tweezers and Bic lighters, spider webs, sprinklers, and heavy traffic.

The Game Master can help out with a little *deus ex machina*. The PCs could make a few insect friends, for example. They might hitch a ride on a dog or bicycle.

Let the players have fun redesigning their characters as bugs. They don't have to be real insects; just pick advantages and disadvantages that seem right: extra limbs, wings, Faz Sense, etc.

Use the Bunnies and Burrows method for playing animals: attributes, damage, and other statistics are based on the player characters' bug-level size, not human scale.



## Tomb Robbers

Genre: Time Travel

The player characters are special operatives for [Drachenfal](#), a wealthy and well-connected collector of ancient artifacts. He is a man of many secrets, including his time machine. He uses it to send the PCs into the past to rob tombs and steal sacred talismans. The campaign is based in the TL7 modern day, at the end of the 20th century.

Before each mission, he equips them with high-tech hardware, a crash course in the local customs, and secret identities. His knowledge of the ancient world allows them to predict upcoming events and outsmart the locals. They'll spend most of the adventure in disguise, trying to speak the language, and avoiding unnecessary contact with people.

Some of the missions are deceptively easy — the PCs show up in the right place at the right time, collect what Drachenfal wants, and return. But sometimes things go wrong. The PCs might have trouble traveling and breaking into high-security areas. They will have to deal with guards, lost and damaged equipment, police, bad weather, curses, cultists, and even a monster or two. (You never know what you'll find when you are robbing an ancient tomb.)

Drachenfal does not have complete trust in the PCs. He is suspicious of everyone... except Ellison, his personal assistant. Ellison joins the PCs on every mission. He's helpful in a tight spot, but he's also a pain in the ass (he doesn't trust the PCs, either). This should add tension and a few subplots to the tomb-raiding missions.

To get the campaign started, use the locations in Places of Mystery. When that gets boring, Drachenfal sends them to places no one has heard of. That's where the real treasures are found.

## **Catholic Caped Crusaders**

Genre: Modern Day

The PCs are the Vatican Five, defenders of the Roman Catholic Faith and the Divine Authority of Papal Perfection. They don't have superpowers. They are like Batman: skin-tight costumes, big capes, and lots of gadgets. Wherever Catholicism is under attack, they suddenly appear and KICK SOME SERIOUS ASS. (Yes, this is not unlike a certain Monty Python sketch.)

Nooooooooooooobody expects the Vatican Five! POW! WHAM! SOCKO!

But seriously... If you don't have five players, add a couple of NPC sidekicks. Design a few silly anti-Catholic villains. Give each PC a Divine Intervention or two. The Pope is their Commissioner Gordon. Make the plots very simple and violent. Quote liberally from the Bible during fist fights with evil henchmen.

## **The Thing in the Jungle**

Genre: Modern Day

In this adventure, the player characters are 75-point tourists hiking through the jungle. They are led by an NPC guide.

While camping one night, they see a streak of fire coming down from the sky. It lands a few miles away. In the morning, they hike to it.

They find a crashed satellite. It looks weird — the technological level is obviously higher than anything they have seen before. Suddenly, the satellite makes some sort of telepathic contact with them.

Then the Men In Black show up. The MIBs make it clear that the PCs have seen something they should not have. They will have to be liquidated. But before the trigger is pulled, beams shoot out of the wreck and kill every MIB in range.

There are more MIBs on the way. The satellite communicates with the characters and reveals a collection of cool gadgets inside its mangled machinery. Let each player choose a few TL11 or TL12 items from the GURPS Ultra-Tech books. The characters instantly gain the skills to use the gadgets properly.

The rest of the adventure is a game of cat-and-mouse. The characters run through the jungle and a few villages, fighting and evading the MIBs. This goes on until the players get sick of it.

At that point, the satellite calls to them. The MIBs are trying to dismantle it and ship it to some secret lab in the US. The characters have to save the machine. When they get there, they fight off a few MIBs and the satellite telepathically guides them through a series of repairs. The adventure ends with a final gift from the machine to the characters as it launches itself back into the heavens.

What is the final gift? Um, I haven't figured that out yet...

## **Planes, Trains, and...**

Genre: Modern Day, One-Shot

Zombies! The player characters are traveling on a jumbo jet at night. They leave their seats and go to the tiny lounge. That's when the rest of the passengers turn into zombies. Hungry zombies! They have to hide in the luggage compartment or barricade themselves in the cockpit to survive. When the plane gets close to the ground, the zombies start to weaken and dissolve. If the PCs can find parachutes and jump out, the zombies will crumble to dust just before the plane crashes.

For research, watch Airforce One, Airplane, and Dawn of the Dead.

If they can't find parachutes, they can try to fly the plane close to the ground, killing the zombies. Or they might try to land it. If they land it (maybe someone at an airport will help them over the radio), the zombies will dissolve by the time the plane touches the runway.



Another version of this plot is the train full of zombies. In this case, they don't dissolve. But there are more non-zombie characters — the player characters will meet a few NPCs after everyone else transforms into the Walking Dead. Maybe the characters will find a weird mystical talisman in the luggage compartment that is responsible for the transformation. If they figure out how to use it, they can change the zombies back into people. Then again, they might just toss the talisman from the train, killing them all. Who knows?

## Who's On First?

Genre: Modern Day, One-Shot

This adventure takes place on July 20th, 1969 — the day U.S. astronauts landed on the moon. The astronauts are the player characters. (They don't have to be the real astronauts. Feel free to make up parallel-universe moonlanders of your own design.) One crew member is an NPC.

When they emerge from their capsule, they see a team of Russian cosmonauts standing there! The Russians secretly launched their own manned mission earlier that day, touching down at exactly the same time. Their capsule is just over a nearby ridge.

At first, the meeting goes bad. If the PCs don't start a fight, the Russians do. Make it silly and have some fun with space suit hoses and low-gravity brawling.

"Take that, you commie bastard!"

"You don't frighten us, capitalist pig!"

Before the fisticuffs get deadly, their tempers cool and they realize that they're acting stupid. They quit fighting and shake hands.

"You know, you Russkies are alright."

"You are pretty okay yourself, capitalist pig."

Unfortunately, Mission Control in both countries want this moment in history for themselves. A shared moonlanding is not acceptable. The NPC astronaut — who has conveniently stayed behind in the capsule — closes the hatch and locks it. He relays orders from Houston: if you want to get back to Earth, kill the Russians and hide the evidence. One of the cosmonauts does the same thing, locking the Russian capsule from the inside.

The PCs will have to team up with the remaining cosmonauts to find a way back home.

## Secret of the Overlords

Genre: Modern Day, Sci-Fi

The world has been taken over by aliens. They arrived with a bang and immediately announced the enslavement of mankind. There was a brief spurt of resistance which they brutally destroyed. Humanity surrendered.

Secular cults formed all over the world to worship the aliens. The cults grew as they murdered heretics; everyone was given a choice to join or die. Within a few years, all parts of the world were divided up between the competing cults. They became known as the Factions.

The Factions exist today with the nations of the world. Different regions are grouped under Faction control. Everyone is a citizen of a country and a member of the Faction that controls it.

The world's governments remain intact. The highest levels of power are a mix of traditional political leaders and Faction priests. This creates enough "palace intrigue" and competition to allow the aliens to remain in the background. They are so far in the background, in fact, that they have completely faded from public view. It has been years since anyone saw one of the aliens.

The player characters are high-ranking members of the Faction that controls North America. They are 150-pointers, with high Status and good connections.

The adventure begins when they hear rumors about the Tomb. They secretly investigate and find the location of a hidden, sacred tomb where the aliens are buried.

Buried?

Yes, the aliens are dead. Within months of their arrival, just as the Factions were taking over, they got sick. By the time they figured out that the Earth's atmosphere was poisonous, it was too late. This secret is known only to a select few of the highest-ranking leaders of one of the Factions. They organized the construction of the Tomb and laid the aliens to rest.



Now that the PCs know the truth, everything seems a little bit different. They see people all over the world wasting their time worshipping extraterrestrial masters who are no longer a threat. What would happen if everyone knew the aliens were dead? What if everyone knew about the Tomb?

At this time, their colleagues become suspicious. The PCs seem to know something, but no one is sure what it is. Are they double agents for a rival Faction?

The tension builds until the PCs have to run. Now everyone is sure they're up to something. They have to hide out or they'll be dead.

They are chased for a little while. Just when it looks like they're going to get caught, they meet... the underground resistance.

They call themselves the Atheists, covert members of a group dedicated to liberating mankind. There are millions of them, spread across the globe. Some live seemingly normal lives, keeping their affiliation hidden. Others live completely outside the system, always in hiding.

The Atheists saved the PCs so they could use them for ransom money and information. But when the PCs mention the Tomb, the Atheists are curious. Is it possible? The PCs are taken to the leaders of the resistance, tell their story, and then lead a small group to the Tomb. Once the Atheists have their proof, they know that their mission might succeed. All they have to do is expose the Tomb to the world and the Factions might break apart.

But they need the help of the PCs. The player characters will have to work with the Atheist leaders, or take over the organization. They might find that the palace intrigues of their former lives in the Faction have been replaced with a low-rent version among the Atheists. It is possible that one of them will act as a Judas against the movement — he might have second thoughts and try to return to his life among the Factions by betraying his new allies.

No matter what happens, they will have to struggle to expose the truth. If they succeed, they should be rewarded with the collapse of the Factions. Give the PCs a chance to save mankind.

## The Gateway Hotel

Genre: Time-Travel Adventure

The player characters are at a convention for the SCA — the Society for Creative Anachronism. They are staying at the Gateway Hotel. One night, they get bored and decide to explore basement. That's where they find a strange door.

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The door leads to series of tunnels. One tunnel into the reservoir of a Medieval city. Thanks to SCA background, they can blend in as they the streets.

There are signs that this is not a real Medieval. Everyone speaks the PCs' native tongue, some of inhabitants are nonhuman (elves, halflings, etc.), there are signs of magic use here and there. It's straight out of a fantasy roleplaying world.

this point, let the players do what they want. PCs to easily travel back and forth between the worlds, using the tunnels as often as they like. quickly acquire the necessary skills to begin adventuring. If they want, they can smuggle in technology. If they spend a lot of time in the city, need to establish alternate identities.

After a little while they will discover that time stops in the modern world when they are away. It does not stop in the Medieval world.

Later, as the campaign develops, you can add complications. For example, you could trap them in the city after a thunderstorm — the rain fills the reservoir. Other complications include: keeping the tunnels a secret, bringing magic items into the modern world, and maintaining their alternate identities.

## The Plague

Genre: Horror, Medieval Fantasy

Get out your Ravenloft map and read The Masque of the Red Death...

The player characters are guests at a party in a castle. In a nearby village, a deadly plague is spreading. As the villagers succumb, a rumor spreads that the cure is in the castle. The gates are sealed against the mobs of dying, infected peasants, but they can't be held forever. The people inside are on the verge of panic.

Give the plague a color to mark its disgusting symptoms — instead of the Black Death or the Red Death, it's the Green Fever or the Amber Plague. Looking from the windows and parapets, the player characters can see desperate villagers in every state of affliction: the early stages, the crippling and disgusting secondary effects, the terminal phase, and the fresh corpses.

Before the villagers break in, the PCs discover that the rumor is true. Each PC gets a different clue that will lead him to the cure. No one else knows. They will have to join together and pool their clues.

If they need a motive, let one or two of them develop the early symptoms of the plague. In addition, they may be followed by suspicious guards or an NPC who suspects what they are up to. If the lord of the castle finds out, the PCs will lose control of the situation — they will be chased, captured, and forced to lead the lord to the cure. As if this isn't enough to prod them along, the villagers have broken in. They are never far behind the PCs as they spread through the castle, desperately looking for the cure.

Before the adventure begins, come up with a cure and decide how many people it can help. Maybe it's a potion that will immunize a handful of people. Or, it could be something magical that cures everyone in the area, saving thousands of people from a sickening death. The cure should be located in a distant part of the castle. As the PCs search for it, they may find out who started the rumor, and why they received the clues.

## The Haunted Castle

Genre: Modern Horror

Another adventure using the Ravenloft map...

The player characters are staying for a couple nights in the village below Ravenloft. While socializing in the tavern, the local bard tells the story of incredible wealth and magic items stored in the haunted keep. Everyone believes it, but those few brave enough to go inside have never come back out.

The PCs are different. They travel up the mountain road and start snooping around the place.

The castle is haunted, but in a Scooby-Doo kind of way — a group of bandits is using Ravenloft as their headquarters, and they've filled the halls and chambers with spooky props, warnings to intruders, and even a decaying corpse or two.

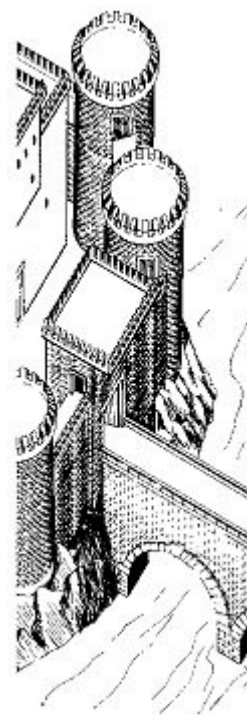
What they don't know is, there are real ghost, ghouls, and vampires in the cellar. None of the bandits has dared to go down there (in fact, the doors leading down are barricaded).

The PCs have a lot to do. First, they can discover the bandits and blow their cover. ("I would have gotten away with it if it wasn't for those meddling kids!") Second, they can find the bandit's treasure. Third, they can get chased all over the castle by the bandits, attacking and hiding until they kill or capture the little criminals. Fourth, they can explore the cellars or accidentally wake some sleeping zombies. And finally, they can become squatters and take Ravenloft as their own headquarters for the rest of the campaign.

Agents of the Invasion Genre: Conspiracy Aliens have landed on Earth, but their presence is a secret. They want to take over the planet. When the player characters accidentally discover the extraterrestrial visitors, the aliens make them an offer they can't refuse: help them conquer Earth or die.

The aliens might not have to threaten the PCs. The PCs might like the idea. The benefits are great — in addition to promising to give each PC a continent to rule, they have access to ultra-technology during the takeover campaign: healing drugs, psionic devices, blasters, scanners, jetpacks, etc. They could even clone themselves to become effectively immortal.

The campaign is played out as a series of missions. Each adventure begins with a briefing from the aliens. The PCs then choose the weapons and gadgets they'll need. As they complete each mission, the aliens' grand scheme will slowly reveal itself.



Will the PCs stay loyal? They might choose to inform the other Earthlings in secret, acting as double agents against the aliens. After a few missions, Black Ops agents secretly contact them and encourage them to defect. If they refuse, they will gain a powerful Enemy.

Give each PC the Divine Favor advantage (p. CI36). The aliens are the equivalent of gods. They can intervene to save PCs in a tight spot. Each PC has his own level of favor with the aliens — if you kiss a lot of extraterrestrial ass, you have a better chance of being monitored and rescued. (Some PCs will raise doubts in the aliens. They are either incompetent or untrustworthy.) As the campaign continues, the pressure mounts to defect and save humanity. At some point, they will probably secretly turn against the aliens and try to figure out a way to stop them.

## **The Skeleton Curse**

The PC find an object that afflicts them with a strange curse. The curse lies dormant until the object is out of their hands. At that point, their skin starts to fall off. The loss of flesh is quick and painless — in a few days, they are skeletons. To get their flesh back, they need to destroy the object. First, they have to find it...

They know that this is how they can end the curse. Once they have become skeletons, finding that object again is never far from their thoughts. Once they find it, they will be overcome with an urge to destroy it. The flesh grows back in a day.

Living skeletons have some advantages and disadvantages. They have no internal organs to injure, they cannot catch diseases, and they never get cold. On the other hand, they cannot walk down the street in broad daylight. They are undead creatures, so people will flee or attack them. They will have to cover their bodies with cloaks and travel carefully.

The skeleton characters can talk, despite the fact that they have no voice boxes, throats, or tongues.

(Obviously, this isn't a complete adventure idea. It's something you can add to an ongoing adventure.)